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HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN.

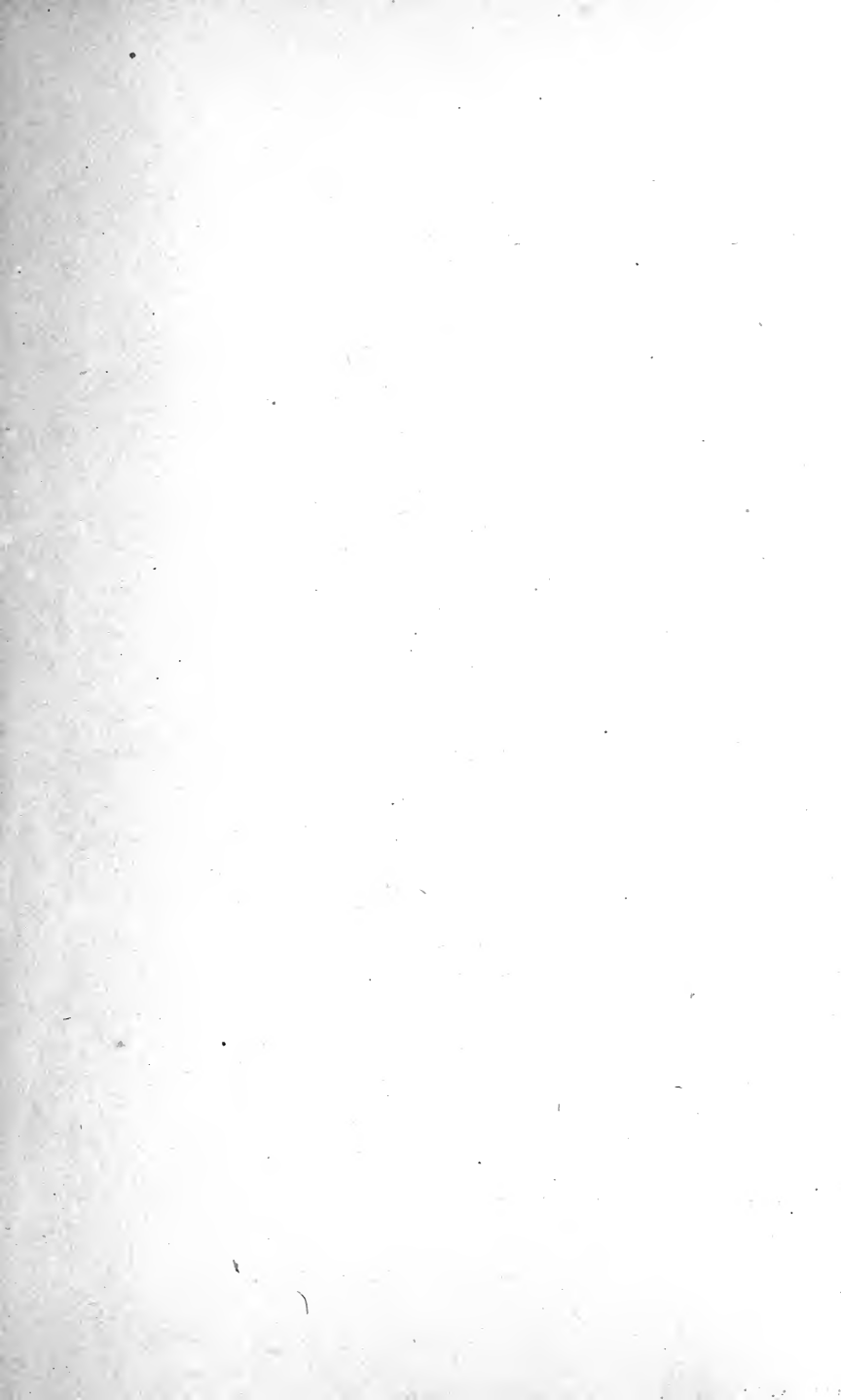
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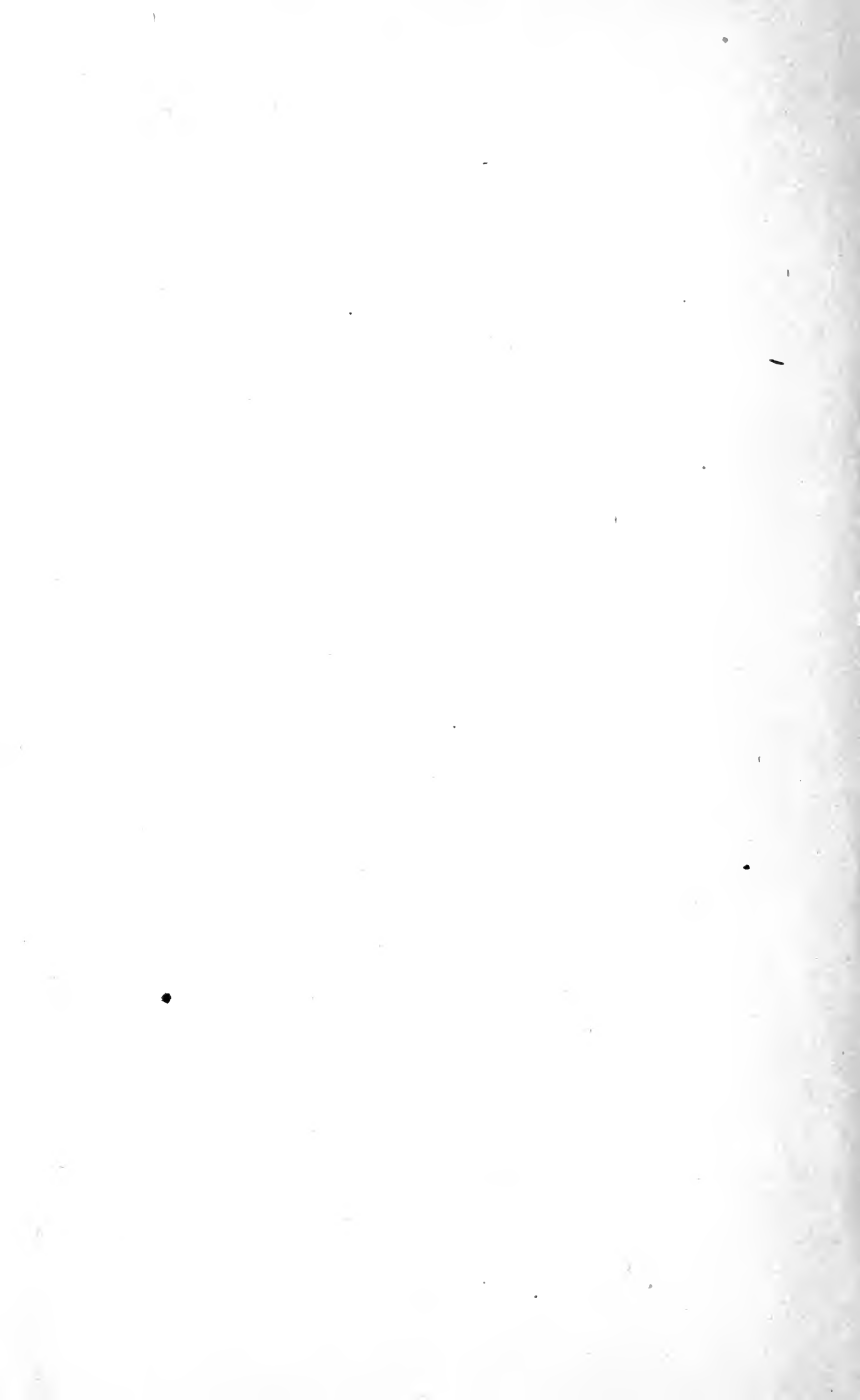
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.











Yours Wm. B. Russell

HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN;

OR,

THE WAY MADE PLAIN.

BY

REV. WILLIAM H. RUSSELL,
OF THE NEWARK CONFERENCE.

WITH INTRODUCTION

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THIS BOOK IS PREPARED ESPECIALLY FOR THOSE
DESIRING TO BECOME CHRISTIANS; ALSO FOR
THOSE WHO MAY WISH TO LEARN FROM
SCRIPTURE THE ESSENTIALS OF CHRIS-
TIANITY IN LANGUAGE ADAPTED
TO THE COMMON PEOPLE.

PREFACE.

THE object of this work is for use more than ornament, for practice rather than theory. It was not intended to captivate by its diction, grammar, or rhetoric; but to state, in the plainest possible manner, the simple facts that relate to our present and eternal welfare; also, if possible, to lead some who are without hope and without God to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, and as it may be found in the Scriptures.

After an experience of twenty-five years' labor in preaching and close observation, there appears to be an opportunity for this unpretentious book to do some missionary work among those who are not Christians, and desire to know how to become such; and also among those who are Christians, but who have not

studied closely the word of God concerning conviction of sin and conversion, duties and responsibilities, privileges and attainments.

Scripture passages and hymns often portray how we may become the children of God, and also point out the way by which the seekers after pardon and salvation may know when they have obtained that which they seek, and how it may be retained by them. Brief selections from the Bible and from the hymns of the Church are therefore here presented.

To these are added a few scriptural evidences, doctrines, and suggestions, which may shed some light and be the means of aiding the seeking ones in "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."

W. H. RUSSELL.

INTRODUCTION.

THIS little book is thrown out upon the world by its author with the sole desire of doing good. In the subject and in its treatment the singleness of purpose of the writer must be apparent to the reader. The book, therefore, must be read and considered from the stand-point of evangelical Christianity. Its aim has molded its style, and, in part, at least, has determined its size. It is small, in order that it may be placed within the reach of all, and may be read in a short time. Its method, in presenting the truth, is such as will be especially fitting for those who are studying the fundamental truths of Christianity with a view to practical improvement in their religious thinking and living. There is a great deal of reading, at the present time, of works about Christianity as one of the religions of the world, but not so much about its saving truths as they

are revealed in the Bible. And yet it is always true that the practical every-day truths of any department of thought are those upon which the world advances to its high destiny. All the discussions of philosophy are valuable so far as they minister to a more thorough knowledge and a broader application of the great principles of human progress. A true philosophy bears its richest fruit in the life of humanity.

It is the purpose of this little work to place clearly before the mind of the reader the plan of salvation from the stand-point of the Bible. "How shall man be just with God?" "What must I do to be saved?" are the great questions of all the ages. The former question is uttered in the oldest book of the Bible, the other is the question of the Philippian jailer. Where shall we find the true answer? It cannot be found out from our self-consciousness. The way is not discoverable by looking within ourselves. Self-study is most important, but even this self-study needs guidance in order to reach exact conclusions. Science tells us nothing as to the way of salvation. It is beyond its province. On

the subject of the rescue of man from the guilt and dominance of sin, it is as silent as the grave. It knows nothing of guilt, and how can it proclaim deliverance. The Bible is the only book that even proposes an answer to these great questions. "It is the only voice that even sounds as if it came from the other side of the river." It answers the questions which this book propounds. "What am I? Where am I bound? To whom am I responsible?" Such questions have been on the hearts and minds of men from the beginning. Every body, either in silent thought or in formulated expression, has made the inquiry, and the book of divine revelation is the perpetual answer. The answers of the Bible are scattered throughout the volume, partly in the Old Testament, completely in the New, here a little and there a little. As the principles of science are gathered from the study of the natural world, from the comparison of its facts, lying here and there, so the principles of religion and its laws and duties are gathered from the widely scattered facts and statements of the Bible. To gather these facts in a clear form, to state the laws of God in simple phrases, so that the way-

faring man, though a fool, need not err therein, is one of the chief functions of this book, and is the chief purpose in the mind of the author. Others, and they are many, have presented these things in elaborate forms for the study-table of the scholar; this work is intended for those who need the plainest statements of these plain but essential and vital truths.

Theological formulation has been carefully avoided, and the desire of the author at every step has been to set forth the plan of salvation in the simplest language, and especially to employ the language of inspiration.

After the presentation of the answers to the questions already indicated, the book closes with the discussion of the evidences of our acceptance of Christianity. In this, also, it is not a studied effort to produce a critical or rhetorical book; but to present, in the plainest language, the biblical ideas.

Here, too, is a field of vast importance. Why we believe is a question almost as important as what we believe. This department is commonly remanded to the scholar and investigator, but it is equally the heritage of all Christians. The

chief arguments for our faith are such as present themselves to the average mind of man. If it were not so, the certainties of God's truth would be shut out from the great mass of the humanity whom Christ came to save. The experiences of all Christians are a part, and the most important part, of the grounds of their faith, but the other forms of conviction are not inaccessible to them. It is a matter of rejoicing that so many works are being published, which bring these important questions within the reach of all the people. Their publication is developing a Christian manhood and womanhood of the very loftiest order. With such efforts we cannot but believe that the future of our Christian thinking and living will be far in advance of what they now are and of what they have ever been. This is another of the aims of this book. It purposes to answer the question, *Why we believe?*

The design of the author, therefore, is manifest. It is not to produce a critical work for those who are engaged in learned investigations, but a practical hand-book for earnest men and women who love the word of God, and desire to know what it teaches concerning the hopes

and aspirations of mankind. There are many earnestly inquiring the way of salvation—they want to know what is believed by the Church of Christ, and why it is believed—they would like to find it clearly stated—they would, especially, like to know exactly what the Bible teaches. In this little work the author purposes to do what so many inquirers seek. He takes the reader familiarly by the hand, he leads him to the place of meditation, he hears what he has to say, and what he wants to know, and there he states the truth as he sees it and believes it. It is in the form of serial statement, as if in converse with the reader, rather than in the form of an essay, that the writer desires to present his work to the public.

But the chief value of the book lies in the fact that it is scriptural. It is intended to present the Bible view on these profound questions. There may be a difference of opinion as to the expositions of the author, but the texts are there, and the reader can judge for himself. The word of God is ever fresh, and the exhibitions of its teachings in new and varied relations will always command the attention of thoughtful men

and women. It is this attempt to bring things new and old out of the divine word, that shows the utility of the Church. For ages men have been studying it, and they have done so with reference to the same great problems, and they will continue to study it, for it is the only solid source of information. It is as vital now as it was when Chrysostom expounded it with such wonderful eloquence; when Augustine formulated it into a great system of doctrinal truths; when Luther opened it, after ages of suppression, to the minds of men; when Wesley showed its practical power in the rescue of mankind from the guilt and dominance of sin.

It is in the belief that this unpretentious book will contribute to the instruction of the people on the great problems of Christianity, and that those who read it will enjoy more fully the great salvation provided by Christ, the only Saviour of men, and that it will promote the progress of Christ's kingdom in this land, that I cordially commend it to all who are inquiring concerning the important subjects of which it treats.

HENRY A. BUTTZ.

MADISON, N. J., *June 1*, 1886.

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HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN;

OR,

THE WAY MADE PLAIN.

CHAPTER I.

Important Questions.

WHAT am I? and Where bound? are very important questions, and have been asked from the beginning. The answers have not always been satisfactory for several reasons. Perhaps two of the principal reasons are, first, because we were not pleased with the truth, as it exposed our defects, and told us what we really were, and to whom we were responsible; and, secondly, because the course we were pursuing would eventually lead us to destruction. Any undertaking should be investigated. The success attained or benefit derived is conditioned upon the nature of the undertaking, and the laws by

which such successes or benefits obtainable are governed. If the questions of "What am I?" and "Where bound?" relate to my spiritual well-being, discovering my real self, as to what I am, and how I may become a Christian, then I should investigate that subject in the light of revealed truth, so as to be assured of a correct answer, and acquaint myself with the history, and the laws or conditions by which that success may be attained and the benefits received. All that relates to man, about mankind, with regard to condition, duty, obligation, responsibility, tendency, or desire, in view of time and eternity, can only be ascertained from the word of God, the source of wisdom. He answers the questions, and informs us how to become Christians. If divine revelation be true, the journey is not ended when we cease to have a being in this world. Where shall we go but unto this word for an answer to these questions, or learn "How to become a Christian?" These are questions of the utmost importance to us. Satisfactory answers should not be slighted,

for we are asking these questions either consciously or unconsciously. Sometimes we really wish to know, and at other times are indifferent about it. But when brought face to face with some of the circumstances of this life we feel that we ought to know more than we do, and fortunately for us, we have in the inspired Scriptures a source of information upon which we may fully rely. In this life we are surrounded by many unknown influences, conditions, and circumstances. There seems to be a necessity for some solution to the problem that we find ourselves confronted with. The journey of life is one that requires time and patience, to be pursued in sickness or health, with associates or alone, through storm or calm; willing or unwilling, there are no exceptions, no substitutes; it is unconditional, absolute, final. This is not a trivial matter, but momentous and eternal—one that concerns every interest in life, in death, in eternity.

With these facts before us, no wonder we are led to ask, "What am I?" "From whence?"

“Where bound?” No wonder we are anxious to know what to do, where to go, of whom to ask? As there is only one true source of information, wisdom would suggest that this source be sought, and this information be obtained. The Holy Bible contains all that may be known about ourselves as to our being; all about God as our creator, as to the object and design of our creation. From this word we are taught the measure of our days, our frailty, and all other things concerning this life and the life to come. In order that we may be profited by this information, three things are positively necessary: First, as there is no other source of knowledge regarding these important facts, implicit confidence in their authenticity. Second, as these facts are to be met by us, entire submission, to follow the directions given by this all-wise Author. Third, complete and hearty co-operation with him, who only is able to do all things for us. “For without him we can do nothing,” but with him, we can do all things through him that strengtheneth us. Whoever is willing to

comply with the divine requirements, shall know of the doctrine, the way, and whatever else is necessary for the present and future life.

First, then, the source of knowledge from which we may learn what we are and where bound, describes man as created from the dust of the earth. "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Man is made in the image and after the likeness of God ; that is, in holiness, for God is an uncreated spirit, and is without form.

This word (see Genesis ii, iii, iv) describes where man was placed, and what he was given to do ; how and through what cause he disobeyed his Creator ; how he was punished for his disobedience by being driven from Eden ; and it gives the command, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." This refers to spiritual death, as Adam did not die the same day. God says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," and "the wages of sin is death." For this, death passed on all men.

This word further describes the condition of

mankind and the natural result of sin through disobedience. Therefore we are, as Adam's posterity, or children, all sinners. "As in Adam," or by one, "all have sinned," etc., so by one, Christ, all may be forgiven. It promises that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, or, in other words, that a Saviour would appear to restore fallen man to the favor of God. The Old Testament contains the history of the Israelites in their bondage, their flight, and their journey to the promised land (thus illustrating the condition of man in the bondage of Satan); their rescue by Moses, their leader, as a type of Christ, our leader; and the land of milk and honey, or Canaan, as indicating heaven, the home of the saved. It contains the very important information we seek in answer to the questions, "What am I?" etc. It contains the fact that there is a God; that he is our creator; that man sinned; that a Saviour was promised. It depicts our human nature in its best and in its worst conditions. It shows what is in man, and reveals his very

thoughts. It illustrates his weakness and his tendencies to error. It contains the laws by which he may be governed. It tells whom and how to worship, love, and obey; the blessings and promises as the reward of obedience, and the penalties and judgments of disobedience. It is the great chart that points out the way to eternal life, and directs the pilgrim through the journey. It warns of danger, encourages to duty, and shows that it is wisdom to follow its teachings. Its prophecies predict the Messiah or Saviour; tells when and where he is to be born; and how he is to suffer and die. Their fulfillment is a fact, and the salvation of sinners is assured, through Jesus Christ the promised Saviour. He is to free us from the law violated by Adam; restore us to the favor of God in making an atonement by dying on the cross, to complete the scheme of redemption; and in being raised from the dead for our justification. He lives to intercede for those who feel their need of being saved, kept, and restored; who, coming, accept and believe that he is the

only begotten Son of the Father, the only Saviour from sin and from eternal death.

The New Testament, which is a part of the Bible, proclaims, that "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," but the name of Jesus. The conditions of salvation are found in the text, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This plan of redemption, these conditions of salvation, are fixed and unalterable. With God there "is no variableness, neither shadow of turning;" he is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." This is the way, the only way. This is the truth, the whole truth. Through this way, and guided by this truth, man will ever find eternal life and heaven. Christ says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." This being the object and subject of inquiry, with so much that concerns us, and in which we are so personally interested for time and eternity; it should engage all our powers to

prosecute this journey, complete this work, secure this prize, and save this soul, which is immortal.

“A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify ;
A never-dying soul to save,
And fit it for the sky.”

“What am I?” The word of God informs me that I am a sinner, first, through Adam ; hence all have sinned. Second, that by my own acts and disobedience I have violated the laws of God and have sinned against him. As “God cannot look upon sin with any degree of allowance,” and is angry or displeased with the wicked, we, being wicked and sinful, have displeased God. Therefore, conscious of the fact, we must stand self-convicted before him, whose laws we have violated ; we are guilty before him. As such, we cannot expect his love or his favor. “If our own heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart,” and he also condemns us. Now as death is the wages of sin, then the penalty or the wages must be paid ; to escape this, some-

thing must be done. What? Here is the position that I occupy: Self-convicted of sin by my own act and will, self-condemned and under the sentence of death, without hope and without the favor of God. "What am I?" A sinner. "Where bound?" To the judgment-bar of God. How shall I escape, to whom look for mercy, for help, for pardon, for justification, for redemption, for salvation? God's word says, "Look unto me and be ye saved." What music in the sinner's ears. "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." If we repent of our sins and confess our sins, he will forgive us. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and unto our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

CHAPTER II.

The Way to Christ.

THIS presents our case as sinners; this represents Jesus Christ as our Saviour; this presents unmistakably what we must do, to be pardoned, forgiven, and saved from our sins; there is no other way, but to repent, confess, and come. May the prayer of my heart be, "God be merciful to me a sinner." "Lord, save, or I perish."

Just here depends the act, the step, and the decision for weal or woe, for time and eternity. By the act we accept or reject the word of God, which is to become the rule and guide to our faith and practice, which reveals to us "what we are," "where bound," the journey before us, and how to pursue it—the two paths, one leading to life and good, the other to death and evil. The step taken determines the way, and the decision made seals our destiny. How very careful

should we be just here. The right act, the right step, the right decision—what important interests to be considered!—an immortal soul to be saved or lost, and all dependent upon my act—what a responsibility!—and yet I am to determine, I am to decide. This may well be called the critical point. When the thought comes, “What am I!” and the whole earth keeps silence, the still small voice of the Spirit comes to my heart and whispers, “You are a poor sinner whom Jesus came to save.” That surely means me, for I am convinced of this. My own heart and conscience declare this, and that infallible word assures me of this. What else can I do, should I do, but to decide for God, for life, and salvation? Then let the act, step, and decision be this :

“ I’ll go to Jesus, though my sins
Like mountains round me close ;
I know his courts, I’ll enter in,
Whatever may oppose.”

“Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out,” is a promise full of cheer and hope.

Having made the decision, and accepted the word of God as the only authentic source of information, and having a willing submission to follow whithersoever he leadeth, the seeker after truth and life is placed in a position to obtain the desire of the heart and soul, if that desire be

“ How can a sinner know
His sins on earth forgiven ?
How can my gracious Saviour show
My name inscribed in heaven ? ”

This leads to the complete and hearty co-operation with him who has espoused our cause, who came to save, to help, to teach, to support, to guide, to redeem, to justify, to sanctify; and, finally, to bring all that love and obey him to that place he has gone to prepare. The word is conclusive: “ Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you . . . that, where I am, there ye may be also.” This answers in part the

second question, "Where bound?" or, in the language of the poet:

"We are bound for the land of the pure and the holy,
The home of the happy, the kingdom of love."

During this journey many things will be seen and heard. There are many who profess to be guides to this place, and who show many signs and perform wonders, whose arguments cannot be met by us, whose statements are plausible, whose words may savor of the truths of the Bible, who may be clothed as angels of light, whose songs of praise may be sweet, and whose voice may be that of the charmer. God's word says, "Beware of" such, for "inwardly they are ravening wolves," they are false teachers, who would "sift you as wheat." "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, . . . and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you; and I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." In searching this word, and in examining this chart, there will be found many things that may

not be understood by us—statements that may be far beyond our comprehension, miracles that cannot be explained, apparent contradictions, prophecies which are full of strange figures and symbols. There must be implicit confidence in Him who rules the world and governs the universe; who knoweth all things, and will, in his own good time and pleasure, explain to us what now we cannot know, and which would not benefit us to know. But this should and does suffice, “What thou knowest not now thou shalt know hereafter.” Here “we see through a glass, darkly;” there we shall see “face to face.” What we need to do is to “trust in the Lord.” During the journey, no doubt, many different opinions will be expressed as to the meaning of certain verses or texts of Scripture. Learned commentators, ministers of the Gospel, representing various denominations, will claim from their stand-point, their doctrines, belief, and forms of worship, and insist upon certain forms and modes as correct, perhaps, may even say that they are obligatory and commanded. Be

not carried away with "every wind of doctrine," but try them, and prove them.

There may also be differences of opinion expressed by the members of the same denomination. The Saviour says, "What is that to thee? Follow thou me." Jesus Christ is our leader, he is our teacher, and he is our Saviour.

" Other refuge have [we] none,
Hangs [our] helpless soul on thee."

"Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man." Wisdom still urges, "Follow me." "I will never leave thee, I will never forsake thee."

My duty is no longer a question, but a fact, that fact revealed in this word. Not hearers but doers receive the reward. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the

judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold : sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned : and in keeping of them there is great reward." This psalm closes with the prayer or desire : " Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer." Whatever others may teach or preach, this thing I must do, hold fast my confidence firm unto the end. For the Lord, in whom is my trust, is able to keep that which has been committed to him, which is myself, body, soul, and spirit, for time and for eternity.

This word teaches all that is necessary to do, and how it should be done ; all that is proper to know, and from whom we are to receive our instructions. Christ " a Teacher come from God." By searching this word we shall know. " Search the Scriptures ; for in them ye think ye have eternal life : and they are they which testify of

me." Here, then, we have that which is able to make us wise unto salvation. This word teaches us to trust in the Lord at all times; to commit our way unto him; to make our wants and wishes known unto him; to call upon him in the time of trouble, and he has assured us that he will answer us.

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bidd'st me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come!"

I come to be

"Welcomed, pardoned, cleansed, relieved;
Because thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come!"

Convicted sinners, conscious of the justice of condemnation, accepting the conditions of pardon, will also feel that there are certain obligations resting upon them. This leads to conformity and co-operation with Him who has chosen us, and whom we have chosen to be our Master, Guide, and Saviour. Conviction of sin precedes confession of sin. To whom shall

we confess, and how? As our sin has been against God, in violating his law, then, to him we must come and make a humble confession. What shall we say? There are many forms of confession, but the most comprehensive is that of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner;" or that of David, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil;" or that of the prodigal, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." What God teaches us is, that only true confession will be recognized by him. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Just here is the knowledge of the gift of the Spirit of God. "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." 1 John iv, 15. This confession of Jesus Christ is made because our salvation is dependent upon him. The word of God, which we have chosen as our guide, teaches that Jesus

is the only Saviour. Therefore, not to believe this would prevent our being saved. This constitutes saving belief, when we allow him to save us. Not only that he can, or will, but that he does, now, this moment, from all our sins release. "Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us."

Having been brought by the Holy Ghost to a conviction of sin, righteousness, and judgment, then to a humble and sincere confession of my sin to God, truly believing in the ability and power of Jesus to save from the guilt of sin, conscious of the "witness of the Spirit" that tells me I am saved by his grace, I am brought into the relation of a child of God. Having been born of the Spirit, which is the new birth, or regeneration, having accepted God as my Father, convinced of my sin by the Holy Ghost, and having believed on the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour, I am entitled to say, "Abba Father." No longer an alien, no longer without hope, no longer in the gall of bitterness; but rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, free from

the law, justified by faith, and redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus to an inheritance in heaven, with an experience that satisfies as nothing else can do,

“I stand all bewildered with wonder,
And gaze on the ocean of love,
And over its waves to my spirit,
Comes peace, like a heavenly dove ;
The cross now covers my sins,
The past is under the blood,
I'm trusting in Jesus for all,
My will is the will of my God.”

Being benefited by the atonement, justified by his grace through saving faith, and having heartily repented, regeneration, adoption, the witness of the Spirit, and conversion take place, to be followed by growth in grace, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, entire consecration, and holiness : all of which constitutes a sinner saved by grace, a child of God, a Christian, and also enables us to solve the problem of our creation—Why? and For what?

1. Why? That we should glorify God in our bodies and spirits, which are his by creation, by

purchase, and by adoption. 2. For what? That we might become co-workers with him in the great work of human redemption, that the kingdoms of this world may become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.

To accomplish this, God has made it the privilege of saved sinners to aid in this work, by preaching his Gospel, by precept and by example, by life and by faithfulness, demonstrated by consecration of heart and consistency of Christian life.

The questions might be asked here, What constitutes a Christian? and, What is Christianity? The name, we are informed, was first given to those who were the followers of Christ at Antioch, as a nickname, by those who held Christ in derision. But now the name is to be desired, and those who have a right to be called Christians are such as adorn the doctrines of Christ. Those who have really and truly been convicted, and repented of their sins, that are following the commands of God, that are leading new lives, that have passed from death unto life,

that have the witness of the Spirit, that have been born again or regenerated, that love God with all their heart and their neighbor as themselves, that are Christ-like in sympathy, mercy, kindness, truth, with many other fruits of the spirit, are Christians. Christianity is more a life than a profession. It is a system founded upon the pure principles taught by Jesus Christ, whose doctrines and precepts are the foundation stones on which it is erected. It operates upon the individual that embraces it, and reflects the light and life and character of the divine Author whom it represents. The grace of God, and the influences of the Holy Spirit affecting the heart, and thereby making us new creatures in Christ, the grace which transforms as well as reforms, will ever enable us to worthily be the representatives of Christ or Christianity. It may be possible to deceive ourselves or others, but we cannot deceive God. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

CHAPTER III.

The Doctrines.

THE essential doctrines of Christianity are not so extensive or numerous but that we may learn them and understand them ; not so mysterious but that we may know them ; not so high but that we may reach them ; not so complicated but that we may solve them, at least all that is necessary to make us wise unto salvation.

As this is the aim and the object of our search, to obtain it is to have life, hope, and peace. What these essential doctrines are, and how we may know them, is of very great importance to us. As before stated, there may be many things that we shall never know or understand in this world. Yet that will not prevent us from becoming Christians or enjoying the love of God in our hearts, or of being saved from our sins. It is not the amount of learning, or the number of countries visited, or vast estates, or

accumulation of wealth that will secure the favor of God, or that will lead us to heaven. But, "he that believeth shall be saved." We are not compelled to know the origin or nature of every thing mentioned in the Scripture to entitle us to become the children of God. Yet it would be well for us to learn all that we can concerning the Lord and his wonderful works for the children of men regarding their salvation. We may not understand all about the existence of God, the Trinity, Satan, death, resurrection, and many other things; but that will not prevent us from believing that what the Scriptures say about them are true. There are but very few, if any, that claim to understand these, except those who are wise above that which is written; and this latter class are those who usually have the least religion, make the loudest professions, and are the means of most of the troubles and difficulties in the community, and become stumbling-blocks in the way of others; creating strifes, jealousies, and bickerings, and discussing questions that do not tend

to edification or to build up the Church of God among men.

These might properly be called soul-destroyers, or the real cause for much of skepticism, infidelity, and wickedness. They argue upon the non-essentials of Christianity, as, for instance, why the Lord did not provide some other means to obtain salvation; why miracles are not now wrought as in former times; as to how one should pray, kneeling or standing; and a thousand or more questions which might arise over which hours of discussion could be wasted without the least benefit to either. Very often there are arguments between different church members with regard to forms, belief, and worship; and yet, upon the real or essential points of faith, there is no difference; all are trying to serve the same God; striving for the same heaven, and hoping to meet again at last.

To know what the essential doctrines are, and how we are to understand them, becomes an important part of our duty. These are the doctrines which will enable us to become Christians,

and to follow the plain teaching of this Gospel way to reach heaven, the home of the soul. First, I am to believe in a divine revelation, and that medium, the Bible, through which we are informed of the existence of God. To begin right has much to do with success. To be right with misfortune is better than to be wrong and fortunate. Now, with regard to spiritual and eternal things, this word, or divine revelation, is not only the law, but the Gospel, and is the "power of God unto salvation." The knowledge of sin and death, the promise of forgiveness and life, the hope of a resurrection and heaven, are doctrines which have their origin in God's word; and whatever hopes we may entertain concerning any of the promises of reward, protection, comfort, or spiritual good, must be obtained in accordance with their conditions.

Therefore, if we wish to be saved and to become Christians, no other way is known than that described in this word, which is through conviction, repentance, and faith. No one has a right to expect to become a Christian un-

less these conditions are met We may see by this that it is absolutely necessary to believe fully, accept wholly, whether we comprehend them all, or know how or why or when these things occurred, spoken of in this word. What we want is the promises fulfilled, the blessings bestowed, and the heaven gained. To obtain these, we must obey, love, and please God the giver. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Unless we have entire and implicit confidence in God and in his word, we cannot please him or receive any thing from him. This is, therefore, the fundamental, the correct, and the only way to obtain the desire of our heart. This is well pleasing to God, and the promises are "yea and amen" to them that believe.

This opens the way to all of God's promises to man. If we cannot explain what we have accepted and believed, that fact will not deprive us of being benefited by its possession. Surely we could not be benefited without it. We may not be able to explain the medicine

which we accepted from the doctor's hand, and which relieved the pain or effected the cure; nevertheless, we were benefited, relieved, and restored. So with God's word. So with the doctrines of Christianity. If the Lord prescribed the remedy for sin, completed the plan for salvation from its penalties, and provided a heaven for those who accept and believe him, "how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" How can we be benefited if we refuse the offers set before us in the Gospel? The fact is, we cannot escape, we cannot be benefited, we cannot be saved. Let others do as they may, "as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." This is the right and the only conclusion. To follow it is life and health and peace. Accepting this divine revelation, and the existence of God, will lead us to believe that he has attributes of character by which he may be known or understood. These may be divided into two classes, namely, natural and moral. The natural are, 1. Unity; 2. Eternity; 3. Omnipresence; 4. Omniscience; 5. Omnipotence; 6. Im-

mutability ; 7. Invisibility ; 8. Incomprehensibility. The moral attributes are, 1. Wisdom ; 2. Goodness ; 3. Holiness ; 4. Justice ; 5. Mercy ; 6. Truth. As to his Unity, we are taught that there is one God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and these three are one, or Triune ; as to his Eternity, he has past, present, and future existence : he is from everlasting to everlasting ; as to his Omnipresence, he exists every-where ; as to his Omniscience, he has the knowledge of all things ; as to his Omnipotence, he has all power ; as to his Immutability, he is without change ; as to his Invisibility, he cannot be seen with mortal eyes ; as to his Incomprehensibility, he cannot be grasped by the human mind, as he is infinite and immortal. Finite or mortal beings cannot understand him or his ways, for his thoughts and ways are higher than ours. The moral attributes are such that their titles explain their meaning ; but we are to believe that God possesses them all. The next in order would be a belief in the Trinity. The Father's qualities have been shown. Next is

that of Jesus Christ, or the Son. How he is the Son is shown in the Scriptures. We are to believe in him as they teach, to wit: that he was the very God manifest in the flesh, that he is the Saviour of men, and that he died for us; also that the Holy Ghost, the third person in this Trinity, proceeds from the Father and Son, and has the same attributes; and, as they are one, he must have them. Just how this is so is not necessary for us to know. What we are commanded to do is to believe it as stated.

With regard to angels, to the devil and demons, these are fully explained in Scripture. As to the origin of man, this has been shown. What we most need, as men and women, is to be pure in life and saved in heaven. We need to be redeemed. This is a doctrine which means the recovery of the human family from sin and death by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, made upon the cross, giving his own life for us, thereby redeeming us; and which includes the atonement. "By Redemption is meant the re-

covery of mankind from sin and death by the obedience and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who, on this account, is called the Redeemer. By the Atonement is meant the satisfaction offered to divine Justice by Jesus Christ, who underwent by his suffering and death the penalty due to our sin." Justification may be understood to mean pardon, because of those acts of Jesus Christ which satisfied the law of God, and which relieved us from the penalty of sin, upon the express condition that we accept Christ by faith; "thus, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." This clearly shows that while all these things have been done for us, making justification possible, yet it will not be complete, nor will it benefit us in the least, until we have accepted it by faith. As to the causes, known as the originating, meritorious, and the instrumental, these are not so important to know in detail, as to know by experience that we are enjoying the benefits and blessings of a saving faith which is the assent of the understanding to all the truths of God,

especially those which relate to the conditions of salvation ; and the consent of the will and all our affections to this plan of salvation as the only way. This assent of the understanding and consent of the will and affections produce implicit trust and entire confidence in God the Father, God the Son as our Saviour, God the Holy Ghost as our Comforter and Sanctifier. This appears to be the flower in full bloom : our conviction as the ground-work, our repentance as the stalk, our belief as the bud, and our faith as the flower. Well might we pray :

“ Lord, give us such a faith as this.”

“ A faith that shines more bright and clear
When tempests rage without ;
That when in danger knows no fear,
In darkness feels no doubt.”

The doctrine of repentance, as taught in the Scripture, implies a sense and hatred of sin, and a love of holiness ; or, as it originally means, “ a change of mind ;” as one has said, “ an earnest wishing that something were undone that we have done.” But true repentance is not merely

a sorrow for sin, because it exposes to punishment. This is worldly repentance. Godly sorrow for sin consists in turning from sin to holiness, and is a repentance that needeth not to be repented of. A deep sorrow which is heart-felt, a renunciation and confession of sin, are evidences of true repentance.

Regeneration is that work of the Holy Spirit by which we experience a change of heart, and have stamped upon it again the moral image of God, as man was before the fall, when God created him in his likeness and image. It is also the new birth, which makes us new creatures in Christ, born of the Spirit. It may also be understood more clearly by the words of John the Baptist, as not to be the work of man, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance," which may produce a change of mind; "but he that cometh after me, he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire," producing a change of heart. The Saviour's answer to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again," appears to be the doctrine of regeneration

clearly defined and explained, and without this change of heart, or regeneration, there can be no salvation.

Adoption is that act of our heavenly Father by which he receives us into his family after we have sincerely repented of our sins, and have accepted, with full confidence, the conditions of salvation by faith. We are then called his children, and made heirs to the heavenly inheritance. Being thus adopted, it is our privilege to obtain the evidence of this new relation to God, and to know it, beyond a question, as the foundation of truth and hope. This God gives us at the time of our adoption, when he “whispers we are his.” This is the “witness of the Spirit:” “He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.”

The unmerited favors thus obtained are, the forgiveness of sin through repentance and faith; the adoption of sons through justification and regeneration; and the witness of the Spirit of our acceptance to God. This describes the changes through which a seeking sinner passes in thought,

in life, in heart, in desires, in dispositions, when turning from his sinful course of life to God, through faith in Jesus Christ, and is known, in a scriptural sense, as conversion. This being changed, renewed, and regenerated, constitutes a Christian, one who is seeking to become holy in life, thought, and heart. "For without holiness no man shall see the Lord." "Be ye holy," is a divine command, therefore the Christian desiring to be holy will seek after it. He will strive for that participation of the divine nature which excludes from the heart all desire to sin, and to be filled with the Spirit and love of God. This can only be obtained by entire consecration of ourselves to God and his service.

" Take my soul and body's powers;
Take my memory, mind, and will;
All my goods, and all my hours;
All I know, and all I feel;
All I think, or speak, or do;
Take my heart, and make it new."

This would be dedicating one's self to God, giving and setting one's self apart for God and

his glory. This is the doctrine of holiness, sanctification, consecration, or whatever term may be used, so long as it produces such effects in the life. This work of holiness and grace begins when the love of God is shed abroad in the heart at the time of regeneration; and to the extent only as we grow in grace, in the knowledge of God, and in duty, are the powers of soul and body dedicated and consecrated to God, are we sanctified or made holy. It is not "the second blessing" so much as it is the grace of God, in answer to our fervent prayers to make us pure and keep us steadfast, "always abounding in the work of the Lord." There is no time in the experience of a Christian when he does not need to watch and pray, need to grow, need help, need grace, need spiritual food, need to be more like Christ, need to "press forward to the mark," and say, with Paul, "Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect," but going on to perfection. This will keep us busy, and to do it will keep us faithful, growing Christians, who will win and obtain the

prize. There are many errors taught concerning this doctrine, sometimes by men and women who are Christians, but have themselves been led to believe what they profess and teach; sometimes that they are entirely perfect, free from the power of sin, not subject to its influence or temptation; that they have obtained all that can be had, and reached the highest point possible in Christian experience. From all such, whose daily walk and conversation are not consistent with this holiness of character, or as becometh the Gospel of Christ, beware! Profession without possession is vain, or, as the apostle James declares, "Faith without works is dead," being alone.

As to the doctrine of perseverance and apostasy, it is the privilege of every Christian to be cleansed from all sin, and to keep himself unspotted from the world, so as not to offend God in this life; and this will be the case so long as he holds fast his confidence firm unto the end. Yet it is also true that if we do not strive for the mastery over evil, by constant help from on

high, we shall be taken captive by the devil at his will, and thereby will make "shipwreck of our faith," and lose our religion, our hope, and be lost. No wonder the poet sings and prays,

" I need thee every hour,
Stay thou near by ;
Temptations lose their power
When thou art nigh."

We may be tempted, and will be ; we may be tried often ; but temptation is not sin ; it is in yielding that we commit sin, and it is in yielding that men fall.

CHAPTER IV.

Death.

WITH regard to death, this is the result of sin, and refers to the body and soul, one physical and the other spiritual. But what is usually understood is the separation of soul and body, the extinction of animal life as the body ceases to exist. "For dust thou art," etc. But the soul goes back to God that gave it; that lives forever. The Scriptures inform us that our bodies shall be raised in the last day, and then our souls shall be re-united to them. They declare that it was "sown [or buried] a natural body," but shall be "raised a spiritual body," etc. According to the Scriptures, some time, more or less, must elapse between death and the last day, the general judgment. This would indicate an intermediate state, that state in which the soul exists between death and the resurrection. This

is not the Romish doctrine of purgatory, as some have called the intermediate state. Purgatory, according to the Roman Catholic Church, is a place where the soul may be purged or cleansed from sin. The doctrine of probation after death has no foundation in Scripture, but is a dogma of the Romish Church.

The intermediate state of the righteous is sometimes called "paradise," "Abraham's bosom," and "heaven;" but, according to the Scriptures, it cannot mean that, as will be shown, though it might mean heavenly states. If there is a state for the righteous, there must also be an intermediate state for the wicked. This must be shown, in order that we may have a clear view of this subject, which alone can satisfy the mind; for if this is troubled or unsettled, there are constantly misgivings, doubts, unrest, and, finally, unbelief. It is a question which every man and woman feels interested in, and one that ought to be answered, so far as Scripture answers it. Speculation, or human ideas should not be allowed, given, or accepted. Whatever

may be known must be obtained from the Scriptures concerning these "last things." We find, with regard to death, intermediate state of the good and evil, the resurrection, judgment, coming of Christ, rewards and punishments, and all other things of this nature, that they may be traced by careful study and searching : a chain without a single link missing. This once formed in the mind lays the foundation for an intelligent religious belief, a satisfactory Christian experience, with a reasonable hope, and enables finite creatures to love, honor, worship, and obey God, their Creator, who will say unto them, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant : enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

We are taught in the Scriptures that "it is appointed unto all men once to die." This we find to be a fact in nature, and, therefore, do not need to explain further than this : When Jesus was crucified, just before he died, he said : "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit : and having said thus, he gave up the ghost " (or died). Luke xxiii, 46. This not only shows that Christ

lived, as we now live, but that he also died, as we must die; and that his spirit went back to God that gave it, as our spirits will. Another instance is that of Lazarus and the rich man, as found in Luke xvi, 19–31. At the 22d and 23d verses, it reads, “And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.” We must not forget that Jesus Christ taught this to his disciples, and that he teaches it to us also. Again, remember the thief on the cross, and the conversation of Jesus with him, concerning this very subject. Surely Jesus knew all about it, if any one did. He answers the question—a very important one to that inquirer and to us, concerning the intermediate state and what it was called. Luke xxiii, 42, 43. “And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with

me in paradise." It will be remembered that the two states spoken of by the Saviour, "Abraham's bosom" and "paradise," were understood by the Jews to mean the same, and also to mean that the souls of the good went there to await the resurrection; further, that they were at rest, and in a state of happiness, opposite to that of torment. It will also be well to notice that Jesus did not mean heaven when he said paradise. This we gather from the conversation had with Mary immediately after his resurrection from the grave, in which he was placed: "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." John xx, 17. After this he appeared unto them, and they handled or touched him. The reasonableness of this appears, regarding an "intermediate state," when we take into consideration what he says about preparing a place for his followers, and for all that love him and believe on him. In John xiv, 1, we read: "Let not your heart be troubled. . . . In my Fa-

ther's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. . . . I go to prepare a place for you. . . . I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." And now, in Luke xxiv, 50, after this promise, we find: "And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." Here it speaks of heaven, where we may expect, if faithful, to be with Christ, when he comes again to take us to the place that is being prepared, and that he went to prepare, for all the good.

The intermediate state of the wicked is described by the Saviour. At the same time he refers to Lazarus being in Abraham's bosom, he tells us that the rich man died. "And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments," etc. Luke xvi, 22, 23. This, with what follows in the concluding verses, clearly teaches that if there is an intermediate state for the righteous, there is also for the wicked. Rev. xx, 13. This state

is between death and the resurrection, after which, we are taught, comes the general judgment, and then those who have done right shall be received into heaven, those that have done evil shall be cast into the lake of fire. This is the final reward and punishment, to which reference will be made.

A question might arise as to consciousness while in this intermediate state, either for the good or wicked. This seems to be shown in the Scripture. Luke xvi, 23. First, with the rich man: "And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." And, secondly: "But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." Here we have the clearest testimony of consciousness, that of

seeing, speaking, experiencing, feeling, hearing, desiring ; or memory, mind, and will. One is at rest and comfort, the other is in trouble and pain. Another question may be asked, Is not this heaven, which is called Abraham's bosom and paradise ? First, it is answered : Jesus used the terms which were understood by the people ; and these terms indicated and meant the condition and state where the souls of the good went, to await the resurrection, after which comes the judgment for the just and the unjust.

With regard to the term "hell," does that not mean the place of final punishment ? No. The Scriptures teach that "death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them : and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." Rev. xx, 13, 14. It means that there is a condition of punishment after death, as described by the Saviour in Luke xvi, 23-25, for the wicked, to await the judgment, and is conclusively shown in Rev. xx, 12-15. Any other view than that

given by the Saviour, would conflict with the doctrine of the resurrection, as described, and obviate the need of Christ's coming. It would also conflict with the divine plan, regarding the judgment day, and of the distribution of final rewards and punishments, if these are given, or we enter upon them at death. The very fact that bodies have been found in crypts and vaults, or sarcophagus, placed there hundreds of years ago, is the most conclusive evidence that their souls and bodies have not yet had a resurrection. So we must conclude that the souls and the bodies of those have not yet entered heaven, and will not until the trumpet shall sound, when those who are in their graves shall hear the voice, and then, for the first time, will they come forth at the bidding of the Master. Then the sea shall give up its dead, and the grave shall give up its dead. This will be the general resurrection, according to the Scriptures; then our souls and bodies will be united. The only reasonable view that can be had, believing the Scripture account correct, must admit or ac-

cept the intermediate state. For those who die Christians, it is one of blessedness, rest, and peace; for those who die in their sins, it is one of remorse and unrest.

This paradise, spoken of by the Saviour, seems to be the only feasible provision made for those who died in the faith, from the beginning, as Abraham, Moses, Noah, Joseph, etc. If Jesus went to prepare a place for us, it could not have been prepared, when talking with his disciples. For he says, "I go to prepare;" and further, "I will come again and take you unto myself," etc. Now, as there is to be a "new heavens and new earth," and in that is to be "heaven," these questions would have to be answered: Where are the souls of Abraham, Noah, and the others now? If Jesus is now preparing a place for us all, and we cannot enter heaven until after the final judgment, where do those who die before it go? It does appear that this intermediate state answers the question, scripturally, reasonably, and only. After death comes the resurrection, of the just and the unjust.

John v, 25-29: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

How this will be done may be found in 1 Cor. xv, 35, 51, 52: "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." Read 1 Thess. vi, 13-18, which will describe this resurrection, as will also the prophet Ezekiel (xxxvii, 1-15). This will show the condition of the bodies called "dry bones."

The doctrine of the resurrection is not new, as Job xix, 26, 27, expresses it: "Though after my skin worms destroy this body [natural body],

yet in my flesh [the raised body] shall I see God ;” also Job, xiv, 12 : “ So man lieth down, and riseth not : till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep” [bed]. This would seem enough to satisfy any one wishing to know what the Scriptures say concerning it. However, the verses quoted are only a few out of many found in the Bible. See Genesis ii, 7 ; Psal. xvi, 9-11 ; Isa. xxvi, 19 ; Dan. xii, 2 ; Hosea xiii, 14 ; Matt. xxii, 28-32 ; John v ; Acts ; 1 Cor. ; 2 Cor. ; Phil. ; Rev. After the resurrection comes the general judgment. By this is meant the period when all men, all nations, shall be tried, the time when the material world will be changed, and that irrevocable sentence from the Judge shall be announced : “ Come,” or “ Depart.” This is described in Matt. xxv, 31-40. This is also shown in Rev. xx. The whole chapter could be read with profit, but the twelfth to the last verses bear on this point of the judgment, and makes the chain more complete.

Very many teach that at death we receive

our final reward or punishment. The plain teaching of Scripture will not warrant such a conclusion. After the judgment come reward and punishment; or heaven, and the lake of fire. The one is the glorious abode where God dwells, and also the state and place of blessedness of God's children. The other is the place of punishment, prepared for the devil and his angels (Rev, xxi, 8), away from the presence of God; by some called hell, but the Scriptures call it the "lake of fire." See Rev. xx, 10, 14, 15.

This word "heaven" is used in the Scriptures to mean several places and conditions, as will be seen: For the atmosphere above us, where the sun and stars have a position, and where God dwells. Paul speaks of the third heaven, also the heaven of heavens, found in Genesis i, 14; Deut. x, 14; Josh. x, 13; 2 Cor. xii, 2. Heb. x, 34; xi, 16; and also Rev. xxi, xxii, describe the heaven to which the children of God are heirs, and for which they love and obey God. The lake of fire, the place of punishment, is

also fully described in Matt. xxv, 41, 46 ; Luke xvi, 26 ; 2 Thess. i, 9 ; Rev. xix, 20 ; xx, 10-15. But what we are to do so as not to know or experience what it is : so live that we shall escape it, so act that we shall please God. He has promised help to sustain us, has promised grace to keep us, promised guidance, which is his word. Let us look into it ; be led by its teachings ; then we shall know what it is to be in heaven, free from all sorrow and care, crowned with immortality and eternal life, and saved.

This continuous chain of Scripture is wrought by the Spirit, and given to man as a rule and guide to his faith and practice, to open the eyes of the blind, and to instruct in righteousness, to make known his will to us, to show us the way, to enable us to "comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length, depth and height, and to know the love of Christ." It refers also to the deep things of God, or the mysterious things, and promises, that "what we know not now, we shall know hereafter." "Wherefore comfort one another with these

words." "These are they," said the Saviour, "which testify of me;" and in Rev. xxi, 5: "Write: for these words are true and faithful;" and in Rev. xxii, 16: "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches." What follows, shows that we are not to add to, or take away from, the sayings of this Book, under a penalty. Men should be careful that what they preach or teach be in accordance with the word of the Lord, which, if we search, will reveal all that we desire to know, or should know. One reason why we do not know is because we fail to search it for ourselves.

" That heavenly Teacher of mankind,
That Guide infallible, impart—
To bring thy sayings to our mind,
And write them on each faithful heart."

"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." 2 Cor. vii, 1. To do this will aid us to become the sons of God, to be co-

workers with him in this important field until our labor is ended, which will be rewarded in time and eternity. By doing this, we shall not only become Christians, not only find out what we are and where bound, but, having found the way, we shall walk in it, "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith."

CHAPTER V.

Recapitulation.

TO sum up the whole subject, we find ourselves in the world, as men, women, and children. Man is a compound being, with a mortal body, and a spirit which is immortal. This spirit is rational, with understanding, affections, and will; therefore man is a free, moral agent, may do as he will, yet responsible to his Creator, as shown in Genesis ii, 15-17. Says one writer: "If men's moral acts are the effects of causes arranged by God, then God is either the author of sin, or his own acts, being the effects of some necessitating cause, such as the strongest motive, or the constitution of his nature, the universe is under the iron law of fate, and sin is an illusion and an impossibility." This would make a man nothing but a machine, a tool; more, a fool; for a man without a will has no use for understanding, affection, or

brains, and as such would be called a fool. The Scriptures teach that men are free to choose—to obey, or refuse to obey. This, however, does not relieve them from responsibility, or from complying with the conditions to procure salvation from their sins, as described in Prov. i, 23–31; Matt. xxiii, 37; John vii, 17.

This knowledge of responsibility, and that God's laws are not to be violated by us under a penalty, which is eternal death, will lead the thinking man to seek for pardon and salvation through Jesus Christ, in the way, and the only way, to obtain it. To do this right, we are told in 2 Chron. vii, 14: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." Also see Luke xiii, 3: "I tell you, Nay, but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." This means that we are to make repentance the first business of our accountable life; that is, when we have reached the period in

which we are conscious of our sinful condition, we are to come at once, without delay, without trying to be a little better, or ceasing to do the evil and living better than we were. All of this is practically an excuse for not truly repenting. It is no more or less than repudiating the work of Jesus Christ, the plan of salvation, and trying, by "good works," to save ourselves, which can never be done. It is, in other words, making morality the standard instead of Christ, the Saviour. This will not answer. We must repent, we must be saved from our sins; not in them, for we would not be benefited. They must be forgiven. We must be cleansed. This will require our whole attention. Our condition is desperate. It is salvation from sin, or eternal death. This is important; it is of more value than all the world to us. When we realize this fact, there will be

" No room for mirth or trifling here,
For worldly hope, or worldly fear,
If life so soon is gone;

* * * * *

“Nothing is worth a thought beneath,
But how I may escape the death
That never, never dies.”

As Jesus only can save us from this death, then we must look to him. When once we have come, and are seeking, we should not listen to or for any thing but the voice of the Spirit, which will be given the very moment we are willing to accept his pardon. Some may ask, How shall I know this voice, and when shall I hear it? In the same manner precisely that you knew how you were convicted of sin. It was by believing that you had done wrong against God, and your belief led you to be convinced. You accepted it as a fact, and that fact became conviction. Now you are convinced that there is no other one to save you but Jesus, and he has said: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John i, 9.

The knowledge of this voice, and the time when we shall hear him speak our sins forgiven,

is conditioned upon two things: First, that we are conscious of our sins, and in earnest to be forgiven. Second, that we fully believe that Jesus can save, has power to forgive, and that we are ready to let him save us just now, and accept the promise and the word as true, and that it is done when we believe. This is an act of "saving faith," or having the evidence of a thing not seen, and enjoying the substance of a thing hoped for. This describes faith.

To understand this in part, and to know it, or realize that it has been accomplished in us, may be illustrated and relied upon, so far as the principle can illustrate spiritual and divine things. For example: We are about to come in possession of a large fortune, or become a partner in a prosperous firm, or form a matrimonial alliance, to spend a year in travel, or to meet loved ones who have long been separated from us. While contemplating the many pleasures which these circumstances would afford, do we not experience and realize in part a real joy and satisfaction growing out of the anticipated fort-

une, alliance, prosperity, and greetings? Ah, yes. The poet sings :

“Yea, and before we rise
To that immortal state,
The thoughts of such amazing bliss
Should constant joys create.”

Just so we are to realize the knowledge of our sins forgiven, and of our acceptance that brings peace and joy to the believing soul. That is, by faith we realize this pardon, hear this voice, and are enabled to accept it. For it becomes substance, and we have the evidence of the thing not seen. This promise of fortune or travel, etc., has actually produced a joy in the mind and heart, and we realize it, without a doubt.

The thought of the pleasure makes the substance real. We do not see it, therefore it is unseen. It is only a hope, therefore not substance. Yet, in fact, it is the substance of the things hoped for, and an evidence of the things unseen. What should hinder the anticipating, earnest, believing, seeking sinner from realizing

and enjoying and believing his sins forgiven, when the word of God promises it, and our very soul yearns for it and needs it? I answer, Nothing but unbelief. The Scriptures teach us, Mark xi, 24, "Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them;" and James i, 6, 7, "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. . . . For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord." This shows us plainly that our prayers are answered, and that we receive only on condition of our faith. God has promised to honor our faith, and we can only honor him by our faith. Unless we are ready to accept his word as true, and that he will do just as he has promised, we can never have this evidence or knowledge of sins forgiven. This "witness of the Spirit" is the seal that he stamps on our hearts that we are his.

To make this yet more clear: this salvation has been provided for me, for every man, just as America was provided, at great cost

of life, sacrifice, and privation, by our forefathers. It is now a land of freedom, where all may come and enjoy its protection, become adopted American citizens, and worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience. To every foreigner only one condition is required, that he accept, by declaring his intentions and willingness to be governed by its laws, and to maintain them. This robe of citizenship is completed, this privilege guaranteed, this freedom a fact. How shall he obtain it? By hesitating, refusing, halting? No. How? By accepting it, by declaring his willingness to comply, and by signing his name to its by-laws or articles of agreement. When this is done, the great seal of the government is attached to the paper. Just so will our God attest, by giving his seal.

“The Spirit answers to the blood,
And tells me I am born of God.”

I am thus a new creature in Christ Jesus, an adopted child; no longer an alien, but a citizen

of the household of faith and heaven. The First and Second Epistles of Peter will explain some of the things that should be known ; James will show what pure and undefiled religion consists in ; and John i, 2, 3, will show what the witness is. There is no part of the New Testament that a seeking sinner or a converted sinner would not be profited by reading and studying, before and after conversion. This is our guide, the Bible is our book ; therefore, we ought to study and read it. To grow in grace and knowledge of God is the duty of a Christian. Upon this depends an increase of light, joy, and peace ; upon this depend our strength and hope ; by this the prospect brightens ; by this the desires of the soul increase ; by this progress is made, the world recedes, heaven is nearer, Jesus dearer, faith is clearer, and religion a blessed fact.

The apostle says, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." This is the object of salvation through the Saviour, that we "might have life, and that" we "might have it more abundantly." We are informed that, with all the

experiences of joy in the soul, and of hopes that lift the fainting spirits up, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." 1 Cor. ii, 9.

"Beyond the bounds of time and space,
Look forward to that heavenly place,
The saints' secure abode;
On faith's strong eagle pinions rise,
And force your passage to the skies,
And scale the mount of God."

Faith to the Christian becomes sight. "For we walk by faith, not by sight." The poet says what is true:

"By faith we know thee strong to save;
Save us, a present Saviour thou:
Whate'er we hope, by faith we have,
Future and past subsisting now.

"Faith lends its realizing light;
The clouds disperse, the shadows fly;
The Invisible appears in sight,
And God is seen by mortal eye."

CHAPTER VI.

Experience.

THE evidences of conversion, so far as experience is concerned, will depend entirely upon the individual, the circumstances of his life, teaching, temperament, and upon how and by whom instructed. As there are no two individuals just alike, perhaps there may not be two conversions just alike. We have never read of another like Saul of Tarsus. This may be one reason why many seek so long, expecting to be wrought upon just as some one else. It is not so promised in Scripture, and should not be so expected by any one. The Lord will give the evidence and the witness in his own way. Let every one seek for the Bible evidences—1 John iii, 14: “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren;” and at the 19th verse; also verse 24; also chapter iv. 2 Cor. v, 17, describes the new creature:

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature : old things are passed away ; behold, all things are become new.” Old desires, feelings, the love of the sinful pleasures of the world have passed away. With this comes a desire for the good, for the right, and for the association of Christians for meetings, and for doing good. Where these are evident and felt, there is every reason to believe we are changed to some extent at least, and with this comes the knowledge that we are passing from death unto life, new life. We must accept these as Bible evidences, and as we continue to seek, we shall continue to find. Just at this point we must not forget to praise God for the change that is taking place in answer to our prayers, which have been for the very thing that is now being wrought, a change of heart, a change of desire, and a change of experience. An acknowledgment to our heavenly Father of the work being done for us will be followed by more evidences of light and joy, until old things have passed away, and there comes a desire to do the will of God in every thing. In proportion to

our acceptance of his proffered aid, and our faith in him and his ability to save us, it will be done, but no faster. We must not expect to receive at once all, for there is very much to learn, to know, to do, to receive; yet we may go on unto perfection. No matter how high we may have attained, still there is more to follow. When once brought to this new field of labor, which is the kingdom or vineyard, and Immanuel's land, we shall find that there is work to do; lessons to learn, which will require all our strength, all our patience, and all the grace we can obtain; but there is enough grace for us, to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. We shall have trials of our faith, of our sincerity, of our trust, and of ourselves. This last we shall find very weak; much more so than we think. Therefore we have the words of the apostle to warn us, in the 12th chapter of Romans, verses 1, 2, and 3: "Not to think more highly of himself than he ought." Also in Galatians vi, 3: "For if a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself;" that is, if he

thinks he can overcome without help from God. Jesus says, "For without me ye can do nothing," etc. We are to grow in grace and knowledge. This will be accomplished by the trial of our faith, "which worketh patience, experience, hope," etc. We shall be met by many temptations, difficulties, and professed friends, with questions and problems, but we must not yield. Others may seem to outstrip us in the race, and attain more knowledge, and an easier way, but keep on steady, looking ever to Jesus; "he will carry you through."

The liability to err is common to man. One says, "To err is human, to forgive divine." As stated in part before, mistakes are made with regard to duty, belief, attainment, conviction, conversion, and sanctification, or Christian privilege, and consecration. A few instances will be given which may serve to show that mistakes are made; and that we are liable to make them, if care is not taken to prove and try the doctrines which are advanced by such men by the word of God.

With regard to the effects of a sincere belief in any thing and every thing, some will tell us that, as long as we are sincere, no matter what we believe, God will accept our sincerity in lieu of knowledge. This is an error without a limit, and equal to saying that a man may commit the most atrocious murder, or plunder his neighbor's goods, or believe in pagan worship or heathen idolatry, and violate every command of God, yet, because he is sincere, God will accept it as right. Can any thing be more absurd? And yet there are those who advance this doctrine. Another is, that if we firmly believe that we are changed, or whatever we wish, it will be done and is done, whether it be in accord with God's word or not. If sincere in our belief it is done. With regard to being rich, or being made holy, or being saved, they say, just believe and it will be done. How many tell us, "Now, if you want to be saved, believe it. No matter about conviction, that will come after. If you wish to be sanctified, just believe you are and it is done. You must believe it, that is all."

We admit that it is possible for some men to believe any thing and in any thing, and that they see and feel what they believe ; but no one else believes it, or sees it, or feels it. Men may believe, as has been done, that they are rich, and yet be without a dollar in their pocket ; some have believed themselves to be saints, while they were the most ungodly men ; some have believed that they were commissioned by the Almighty to take the lives of their children, or the life of a President, and yet the people that made the laws did not believe it, but caused the murderers to suffer the extreme penalty of the law. Men and women may believe the most ridiculous things concerning religion, but they are mistaken ; they are deceived, and deceive themselves and others. They are nothing more or less than religious fanatics, cranks. A man may believe himself to be an angel, but not until the wings appear will others believe it ; he may believe himself holy, but not until his words and deeds agree will it be accepted ; he may believe himself a child of God, but not

until born of the Spirit and accepted of the Father will he have the witness of the Spirit that tells him he is born of God; he may believe himself, while on earth, to be in heaven, but not until he hears the words "Well done" shall he ever enter heaven.

Young Christians are more liable to fall into these errors and make these mistakes than older ones, because they are weak, inexperienced, and are expecting to be taught by older professed Christians or those who have been longer in the way. It is from some of these that the young Christians learn to be mistaken and receive erroneous instruction. It is a mistake to suppose that because one has been several years, or even many, in the way, or a member of the Church, that he knows or will know every thing about the rules, or be able to explain the doctrines, or guide the youth, or understand the Scriptures fully. These things are only known to those who seek, search, and study the Scriptures. A man will never know unless he asks, will never be pure unless God purifies him, and

will never be a way-mark for others unless he first receives the light and then allows it to shine, "so that others seeing his good works will be led to glorify our Father in heaven." These only are the "lights of the world," are way-marks to the kingdom, are reliable guides, or competent to give advice or direct in the way. "If the blind lead the blind both will fall into the ditch." "As many as are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God," and these only know the way and are competent to direct others in the way. The apostle says, "Follow me as I follow Christ." This is a safe rule, and better than the doctrine sometimes advanced, "Do not do as I do, but do as I tell you to do." This is equal to the statement, I am not a Christian myself, I do not believe in the Bible, I have never experienced religion, I do not know the way; but do as I tell you and you will do right. Too many of this kind are directing the minds and giving instruction to our youth, who are from them receiving their first lessons which affect the whole after life. The

first impressions are the most lasting, and should be right, just, and true.

We need to be saved, it is true ; but we need to know that we are saved, and how to be kept saved. Wishing will not save us, hoping will not keep us from temptation, nor will praying and believing keep us from temptation. We are not exempt from temptation or from the influences of evil all around us. But we must watch and fight and pray. We must not yield to the temptation, for yielding is sin. Each victory over this will help us, by the grace of God, to win another. What we need is to know how, when we are surrounded by these evils, to overcome them. It is not enough to have a light, but to have it shine when we need it, to have it ready in the emergency. It is not enough to know that we were saved twenty years ago, but to know that we are saved now. A present Saviour and a present salvation, a live faith, an active faith, and a present faith, is the faith

“That laughs at impossibilities,
And cries, It shall be done.

“That bears, unmoved, the world’s dread frown,
Nor heeds its scornful smile;
That seas of trouble cannot drown,
Nor Satan’s arts beguile.”

The apostle describes this life of faith, as being dead to the world and alive to God, as shown in Galatians ii, 19-21: “The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” The man who thus lives by faith, and who has on the whole armor, is described in Ephesians vi, 10-20: “Finally my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil,” etc. The rest of the verses will explain what this armor consists of, and how and where it is to be used, so that we may overcome at last. Thus informed of our duty, where we are bound, how we are to be kept, and how to succeed, we have only to follow the commander as faithful soldiers, and the victory shall be ours.

“O that with yonder sacred throng
We at his feet may fall!
We'll join the everlasting song,
And crown him Lord of all.”

In order that we may be kept in this journey of life as faithful disciples, we must “deny ourselves, take up the cross, and follow Christ;” every day and every hour constantly watching, always in a praying spirit, and ready to do whatever can be done for God’s glory, for our neighbor’s good, and our own spiritual welfare. This will not admit of carelessness as to duty, indifference as to the claims of the Church, coldness as to our religious life, or an unwillingness to aid in the benevolent objects connected with our holy religion. As we are not our own, and as we are the stewards of God, a just sense of obligation, responsibility, and accountability should direct us in all the affairs that relate to our present and eternal welfare. With such a view of our real condition, it should lead us to be just in our dealings with God and man; liberal in our bestowments, gifts, and donations;

charitable in all, which includes every interest, every act, every thought, and every word. This will lead us to the discharge of every duty, to the entire satisfaction of our God; and unless he is satisfied we shall never be.

“To serve the present age,
My calling to fulfill,
O may it all my powers engage
To do my Master’s will.”

There will be no time during this Christian journey when we shall not need the divine guidance, when we shall not need his love in our heart, and his help; no time that we may omit praying, watching, or growing in grace; no time when we may fold our arms and say, “There is nothing for me to do,” or leave it to be done by others. “We all have a work to do.” No one else can do it, and we are to do it with our might. We are to be the ambassadors, the heralds, the lights, the workmen. When we fail in this the cause of God languishes, men and women are not warned, instructed, or invited by us, and, through our neglect, they

are unsaved. What a responsibility rests upon every Christian to do his duty as a follower of Christ! To refuse to do this means coldness, indifference, loss of spiritual life, and heaven. For he that knoweth his Master's will and doeth it not, "shall be beaten with many stripes."

There are many allurements in the world, but a Christian ought not to be attracted by them. His heart and his affections ought to be centered on things above, and they are. If not, then 1 John ii, 15, describes him: "Love not the world," etc. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Also see verses 24, 25, and 26.

The highest ambition of the Christian, and the strongest desire, is to attain the full stature of a Christian, and to do the will of our heavenly Father. To reach this and to do this require earnest effort and constant vigilance, with divine help.

"Arm me with thy whole armor, Lord,
Support my weakness with thy might;
Gird on my thigh thy conquering sword,
And shield me in the threatening fight:

“From faith to faith, from grace to grace,
So in thy strength shall I go on;
Till heaven and earth flee from thy face,
And glory end what grace begun.”

“Ne’er think the victory won,
Nor lay thine armor down;
The work of faith will not be done
Till thou obtain the crown.”

To doubt these truths and ignore their teachings is to take the risk of losing what the Scriptures declare to be of more importance than the whole world. “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” Matt. xvi, 26.

If for no other consideration, this should be sufficient to make us labor that our souls might be saved. “He that believeth shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned.” What to believe and how to believe is all-important, and we are to believe to the saving of our soul. Heb. x, 38, 39: “Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of

them who draw back unto perdition ; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." If we are, then we shall be found in every good word and work. The Saviour, while on earth, went about doing good. If we are his, and follow him, which is the test of discipleship, we shall be Christ-like, and shall be Christians. Without this fruit and this Christian life we shall fail, utterly fail. The real Christian knows no such word as fail. To have Christ for us is to have more than can be against us. "They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever." "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end." "Fear not, little flock," etc. Matt. v, 18 : "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." These Scriptures are full of comfort, full of help, and full of encouragement to the man who believes them. They are immutable. What we need is to rely on them, follow them, and keep them, for in doing this there is great reward.

CHAPTER VII.

The Commandments.

THESE commandments may be found in Exodus xx (known as the Ten Commandments), together with the new one in the New Testament, John xiii, 34, and all others that we find in this word of the Lord :

“Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth : thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them : for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me ; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy

God in vain : for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work : but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God : in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates : for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day : wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.

“Honor thy father and thy mother : that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

“Thou shalt not kill.

“Thou shalt not commit adultery.

“Thou shalt not steal.

“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife, nor his

man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's."

By keeping these and believing them, we shall be aided in accepting this creed :

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth :

"And in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord ; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary ; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried ; the third day he rose from the dead ; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty ; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

"I believe in the Holy Ghost ; the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints ; the forgiveness of sins ; the resurrection of the body ; and the life everlasting. Amen."

Then shall we not only learn, but know the meaning of this prayer, that we are taught to say :

"Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be

done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread: and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us: and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen."

THE LORD'S PRAYER PARAPHRASED.

Our Father who art in heaven. That is, not our father on earth. If all the people in the world are one family, then there must be a head to that family, and a creator; that Creator is God, our Father Almighty. Therefore, when we pray, as members of that family, we are taught to say, "Our Father who art in heaven," to distinguish him from our earthly father.

Hallowed be thy name. As God our Father in heaven is holy, and his name above every name, therefore, when we speak it, we should remember this fact, also: that we are sinful and weak, and should honor the name of our Father, by this reverence, and say, "*Hallowed, or holy, be thy name.*"

Thy kingdom come. There are two kingdoms. 1. One of light, joy, and peace—God's kingdom. That kingdom, when it comes, makes us happy and hopeful, and gives life. 2. There is another kingdom, of darkness, in which are misery, unhappiness, banishment, and death—Satan's kingdom. Therefore desiring good, and life, and hope, and heaven, when you pray, say, "*Thy kingdom come.*" If Satan's kingdom comes, we shall be in the darkness, and lost. If God's kingdom comes, we shall be in the light, and saved.

Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. As God is our heavenly Father, we should obey him; as children, we should love him, and do whatever he commands. "What wilt thou have me to do?" The answer comes, "Obey me. I command angels, and they do me homage, they veil their faces, there is no disobedience with them; therefore, if you are my children, do this, as the angels do in heaven. Therefore, keep my commandments." "For he that loveth me, keepeth them," "and in

keeping them there is great reward." To secure this, our very souls would say, "*Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*"

Give us this day our daily bread. This is to be understood in two ways, temporally and spiritually. First. God causes the grain to grow, and the earth to yield her increase, for the temporal and physical support of man. We need to pray that our Father in heaven will so prosper and cause the fruits and grains to grow, that our daily supplies shall not be withheld. That we may be sustained, that our physical bodies may have support, we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." Second. In a spiritual sense, also, we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," God being a Spirit, and our spiritual bodies dependent on spiritual food. The Saviour said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God;" and he said to the woman at the well: "I have bread that ye know not of," etc., "which if a man eat he shall never hunger," or die. This is the Bread of Eternal Life. The children of Israel gathered

the manna every day. So we must get our supply daily. This may teach us to say to our Father in heaven, "Give us this spiritual bread, daily."

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. Feeling that God is good, holy, kind, and merciful, and we so liable to err, who so often break his laws, and overstep the bounds, and go where we should not, we are inclined to believe, from the love of our earthly father, that God, our heavenly Father, in answer to our heartfelt prayer, will not only hear, but forgive. We therefore pray, "Forgive us our trespasses" against thee, just as we forgive our neighbors, when they do us an injury or wrong—"as we forgive them that trespass against us." If the Lord should answer this prayer, then we should not be forgiven many times; for in many things we really say, "Do unto me as I do unto them," and in the very same manner, for any wrong or injury, so do unto me, "as we forgive them." The Saviour has taught us to forgive and to love one another. We will not ill-treat, or misuse,

or trespass against our neighbors; but, if we do, we should desire them to forgive us. "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you." So we pray, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us."

And lead us not into temptation. If we are the children of God, we shall be led by his Spirit. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." James i, 12-15. Being led by the Spirit, our sympathies and our conversation are in heaven. Our desires will be to glorify God in our bodies and spirits, which are his, and they will be pure and holy, while our carnal nature is subdued. Thus directed and led, our prayer will be, "*Lead us not into temptation,*" or suffer us not to be led into wrong, or to lust after any evil, and when we are surrounded by evil influences, deliver us from their power, so that we may not fall or yield.

For thine is the kingdom. Because it is *light, joy, and peace*, a spiritual kingdom; for this my heart yearns.

The power, and the glory, forever. As the Ruler of the universe, all power on earth and in heaven is thine. Thou art all majesty; when thou speakest, the earth trembles, and when thou dost "breathe upon the dry bones," they live; when thou art angry, who can stand? One word from thee, and the heavens are opened; another word, and the sea is lashed into fury. The lightnings are made to flash, and the thunders shake the earth. Again thou dost speak, "Peace, be still," and behold, there is a great calm. No other one is able to control them. "For thine is the power," and "Thine the glory, *forever.*" Thou that sittest in the heavens, that liftest the curtain of darkness, and the light comes in, to make the earth beautiful with the sunshine, and the showers, the influences of which produce the flowers and the waving grain; that carpetest the earth with grass, and adornest with foliage the mighty forests. This glory and this beauty are the work of our all-glorious and all-wise God. "Thine the glory, forever." Not for a season, and then to pass

away, but "from everlasting to everlasting," without end. "Yesterday, to-day, and forever."

Amen. So let it be, so let it ever be. Thou art my Father, let me never leave thee, let me do thy will. Thy name so holy, thy kingdom so full of promise, let it come. This "bread" of eternal life, let me eat of it constantly; let me forgive my neighbor, then let me be "forgiven;" let me be led by thy Spirit. Keep me from all evil, deliver me from yielding, for thine is the power, and thou canst help, aid, and assist. Thine is the power that can save, thine the kingdom I love, thine is the glory that excels and lasts forever. So let it be, for me, and in me, so that I may be

"Forever with the Lord,
Amen, so let it be."

This is the prayer Jesus taught us to say.

CHAPTER VIII.

Reflections.

HAVING presented the reader with a few thoughts regarding man, his life, journey, responsibility, and destiny, it might be well to consider a few things which may enable us not only to have the knowledge of the problems of life and its duties, but also to enjoy the benefits and privileges as the reward of obedience.

To understand what we are to do gives evidence that we are in possession of our faculties. This constitutes us rational, thinking beings, accountable and also responsible for our acts.

We are competent to exercise our judgment, and have the power of discriminating between right and wrong, and the knowledge that disobedience shall be punished, and obedience shall be rewarded. As intelligent and rational beings, it is expected that we shall

act in accordance with such intelligence, by doing what we know to be our duty, whatever that duty may be. This may not always be in accordance with our views, or the views, habits, and customs of others; but there is only one rule to duty, and that is to obey. It may create opposition, may produce ridicule, perhaps call forth the smile of scorn, or even the frown of pretended friends. Even so, we must not forget that "we have a cross to bear," and

"It will only make the crown shine the brighter
When we have the crown to wear."

This presupposes trials, obstacles, and difficulties; but do we not have the divine assurance of victory and success?

"In the world ye shall have tribulation; but in me ye shall have peace." A few questions may be asked here concerning duties, helps, and growth. What should I do after my conviction of sins? Confess them to God and truly repent of them. Then ask God to forgive you for Christ's sake, who atoned for your sins and

died to save you from your sins. This may be done at the church, at the home, in your own room alone with God, or with an earnest Christian, who may aid you in seeking the Lord. An evidence of sins forgiven is the privilege of every one. Seek until it is obtained, as shown. When the evidence is received of the witness of the Spirit, and of being an adopted child, how may I continue to live? This is very important to know, but more important to do.

We cannot live in sin, therefore we must not follow in the ways of sin, or seek our associates among those who go with the multitude to do evil. But if we are to really live, as we have just begun this new life, we must lead new lives, "following the commandments of God." We are to seek Christian associations, attend regularly the services of the church, read those books that will aid us in the knowledge of God and Christian duty. We are to attend to our private devotions, and the social meetings of the society or church, to aid in the various enterprises for the glory of God, and our neigh-

bor's welfare. "We are to cease to do evil, and learn to do well." This, of course, will not admit of our doing any thing that will bring a reproach on Christ, nor allow us to practice or participate in sinful amusements, or questionable entertainments. If there is a doubt in our minds with regard to it, let us not commit ourselves, to find out after that we had done the wrong. This often furnishes an excuse for the first step backward, and back to condemnation and sin. But can I not have any worldly amusement or pleasure? No, not as such, for a real Christian will not love the world more than Christ, nor worldly amusements more than Christian duties, if growth in grace and a desire to please God be the object of the new life. The Saviour taught that it should be our meat and drink to do the will of our Father in heaven; it cannot be his will that we should love worldliness more than godliness. There can be no mistake. "If we love the world, the love of the Father is not in us." Perhaps we have not thought of that statement made in the Scripture, and the force

it has upon a Christian as an incentive to constant duty, which must give more pleasure than could ever be obtained by all the pleasures in the world, for they only leave "an aching void the world can never fill." "There is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance."

"Yes, I have read that, or heard of that, but how can I cause angels to rejoice?" I answer, by showing others by your good words and works and Christian life that you are a new creature in Christ Jesus; by pointing sinners to the Lamb of God that "taketh away the sins of the world;" by admonishing them, persuading them, to forsake their sins by repenting of their sins; and also by telling the story of Jesus and his love, and that he is willing and waiting to save others. This will enable us to work and labor for Christ and for sinners. If we are instrumental, and we may be if faithful, of being the means of converting a sinner from the error of his ways, or of leading a sinner to Jesus for

pardon and salvation, which means the same thing, we shall cause, or be the means of causing, a rejoicing in the presence of the "angels in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." This will also create a joy in our own soul that is worth more than all the worldly pleasures or amusements in which we may engage. Those who have felt this joy will strive to win souls. By doing this, worldly pleasures vanish, and sink out of sight; then we see light in his light, and "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

What will enable me to retain my desires to do the will of God, and not be led away from the path of duty? The Scriptures give an answer: "Commit thy ways unto the Lord, and he will bring it to pass." Also see Proverbs, 1st and 3d chapters. These will give all that is necessary to follow; to do it will insure safety and success. This is that wisdom from above, whose ways are pleasant and whose paths are peace. "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

Does this mean than I am not to deal with, speak to, or even be found among, at work, or do business with, those who are not Christians? In John, 17th chapter and 15th verse, may be seen how we are related to the world and to those who are not Christians: "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." The whole chapter, which contains our Lord's high-priestly prayer for his disciples, will explain our position and our duty to others.

We are commanded to go into all the world and preach his Gospel, and this we can do by our Christian example, which has been explained. We are not to do those things or repeat the words done and said by wicked men. We are to keep our tongue from evil and also our lips from guile. We are to "let our communication be yea, yea, and nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than this cometh of evil." In other words, we are to "watch and fight and pray." These are three duties of a Christian soldier, and this is to be continued each day and hour. Having once

placed our hand to the Gospel plow, or become the followers of Christ, we are not to turn back, or even look back. "Remember Lot's wife." Our safety depends upon our obedience to all our Christian duties.

"To patient faith the prize is sure,
And all that to the end endure
The cross shall wear the crown."

Again. Now if I am saved from my sins, and have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus, am I not entirely saved? and if so, then is not "once saved, always saved?" To this I answer, Yes, and No. First, the former part of the question might be answered Yes, if it relates to the completeness of the work of cleansing from sin, and also of the work of redemption. Jesus said, "It is finished;" this is to be understood complete. And so long as I obey and follow the conditions of this blood-bought privilege, freedom, I shall be a free man, but when I violate the conditions I shall fall back again into bondage. We must not forget that this freedom is a condition, and

that this salvation is also a condition, dependent upon faithfulness and obedience, just as a man's national freedom is dependent upon keeping the laws which provide him protection. To violate them makes him a transgressor, and subjects him to imprisonment. Are you entirely free when under lock and key? No. When the sentence of the law is passed upon you? No. Nor are you entirely saved from the liability to sin, or from committing sin, when you will not use the grace promised, the help, and the power assured to keep you. You are not forced to violate the law; that is done willingly or by your own volition. Nor will your being once a free citizen always keep you one unless you keep the law inviolate. The general view concerning this "once being saved, always saved," is not in accordance with Scripture or sound reasoning, and is by many misunderstood. I answer again, Yes; if we attain that condition in life where we are beyond the possibility of doing or violating the commandments of God, in being led astray or doing wrong.

Then, of course, when we are once saved, and remain faithful, we shall always be saved. "He that endureth to the end shall be saved," but only such.

Do you mean that when we are saved now, we are saved in eternity? O, no! Well, that is just what *always* means; it means eternally, in time, in eternity. We are saved now, as long as we keep his commands and love him and obey him. This is a present-time salvation from sin, and, if we are faithful, it will become a future and eternal salvation, where there is no sin. Salvation is to be understood as that particular and peculiar benefit, glory, state, condition, or possession, that may be ours as an experience and blessing in this present life; that which Jesus Christ purchased, provided, and secured for all men, every-where, for all time, when he came into the world—when he died upon the cross—when he ascended into heaven, where he ever liveth to make intercession for us; and which he will give unto each one that has been faithful unto death. Then shall we have this complete

and eternal salvation. Heb. v, 7, 8, 9. The man who has been converted and saved from sin, and from the desire to sin, is a new creature in Christ Jesus; is a subject in whom the grace of God can so operate, and will operate, that it will subdue his natural tendencies, passions, and desires, so that his will becomes the will of his Creator, and the Spirit of God will work in him to will and do of his own good pleasure. He will be molded and fashioned like him. And in this frame of mind and this condition of body the man becomes and is in a salvable condition, or ready for this condition of salvation, full, complete, eternal, and in heaven. Rev. xix.

We cannot be saved on earth from our sins until we have accepted the conditions. Nor can we be saved in heaven until we have attained the condition necessary to enter that glorious abode, "where God the Son forever reigns."

The term "salvation" has become very much abused by the use which has been made of it. It is often used to express conversion, regenera-

tion, sanctification, pardon, religion ; but surely it does not mean this. All of these may be the effects and results of salvation. When we read in Exod. xiv, 13, it would hardly mean any of the above terms: "And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord," etc. This would indicate the power of God in the miracle which was wrought before them, in the destruction of Pharaoh and his army. Again, in Luke ii, 29, 30, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." By this it would seem that Christ was salvation. He is our Salvation, the Author of salvation, and our Saviour. Paul also says: "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." And in Luke i, 76, 77, "And thou, child," etc., "to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins." In Rom. xiii, 11, we read, "For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." This would indicate

that we are approaching this salvation. So Christians are, and they shall see it; see him who is our Salvation, the Author and Finisher of our faith. In 2 Tim. ii, 10, we read, "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." Where would this be if not in heaven?

How can I pray without ceasing? Just as you can love without trying. It does not require any effort to have a constant, indwelling, spontaneous affection for mother, wife, or children. This love abides with us, in fact, it is a part of our being; and we live to love. So prayer is a part of the Christian. It abides with us. We are, or should be, in a praying spirit; in fact, we love to pray and live to pray.

"Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air,
His watchword at the gates of death;
He enters heaven with prayer."

It is not the long sentences we often hear; it

is not the many words we use. These are only the form of prayer.

“Prayer is the simplest form of speech,
That infant lips can try.”

It is “the falling of a tear;” “the burden of a sigh;” “the upward glancing of an eye.” It is that communion with God, when our hearts and lips are tuned to sing or meditate upon his goodness, mercy, and love; when gratitude becomes the main-spring of the soul toward him. This, with obedience, will produce in the Christian a praying spirit always, without ceasing, and will be acceptable unto God.

What is Christian perfection, and how may I possess it?

We are told by the psalmist that “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul;” that is, this law is so complete, so comprehensive, it covers every thing or circumstance that I may wish to know or be placed in, and to follow its teachings will be the means of changing the condition of mind, life, and acts from

a wrong and sinful course to a correct and righteous or holy course. This would be considered a perfect law. Christian perfection, therefore, would be to follow the laws of Christ, to be governed, directed, and to have the knowledge of them, that they become the means of changing the condition of mind, life, and acts from the carnal to the spiritual, from loving self and the world to loving God and heavenly things above every thing else. Such would be considered perfect Christians. It is not to be perfect as an angel, or seraphim, or as God ; but being fully and completely the Lord's disciple and follower as a true and faithful man, converted and saved from sin, desiring to do his will. This we are to seek and obtain by constant devotion, complete consecration, and humble submission.

“Then, when the mighty [or perfect] work is
wrought,

Receive thy ready bride:

Give us in heaven a happy lot

With all the sanctified.”

Unless we are pure in heart and perfect in our Christian life we cannot expect to enter there. "Be ye also ready" [prepared], could be understood to apply to Christian perfection. "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection." This will be a pleasant progressive journey. It will fit us for our work here and our rest hereafter. Well might we adopt the hymn, "More holiness give me," etc. Read Eph. iv and v, also Phil. iii, 12-21.

CHAPTER IX.

“In Essentials, Unity.”

THERE is only one way to the cross. The Gospel of our Lord and the principles inculcated by him, together with his spotless life, which was given for the salvation of men, became the “Rock” on which the Church of God was originally founded and built. “Other foundation can no man lay,” says the blessed Christ. Therefore, whoever attempts to erect another standard, or to preach another gospel, says the apostle, “Let him be accursed.” It is this Church, with its principles maintained, its gospel doctrines preached, its foundation left undisturbed, that is to stand, against which the “powers of hell shall not prevail.” Fidelity to this Gospel guarantees the prosperity and strength of the Christian Church in all ages, and for all ages. This, therefore, becomes the essential. If only in unity there is strength, then whatever tends

to division or disunion should not be practiced or taught. To be one in Christ means "unity," or oneness. If united we are to stand, then to be divided we must fall. We are informed by the Scripture that "A house divided against itself cannot stand." This will also apply to the Church, family, or government. This being true, the greatest diligence should be exercised, the closest attention given, and the most careful watchfulness maintained, to keep unspotted and to perpetuate blameless from "wrinkle or any such thing,"

"The Church our blest Redeemer saved,
With his own precious blood."

The essential doctrines of the Bible are a harmonious whole, and are embodied in the Apostles' Creed. An intelligent, saving belief in this is divinely inculcated, and is absolutely essential to salvation. The conditions of obtaining and enjoying the benefits of this salvation from sin are dependent upon strict compliance with the divine requirements, which are repentance

toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, together with a sincere desire to receive pardon, justification, regeneration, adoption, the witness of the Spirit, sanctification, or entire consecration of body and soul to God and his service. This produces hope in this life, with heaven and immortality in the world to come.

The great command of the Saviour to his disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach *my* Gospel," becomes the commission of every minister of the Gospel, and no others have authority, no others are called to preach his Gospel, or his word. This, of course, precludes any other kind of preaching but the Gospel of Christ. Paul says, "If I, or an angel from heaven, preach any other," etc., "let him be accursed." This is not only emphatic, but terribly and fearfully conclusive. To deviate from this command is to incur the displeasure of God, and occupy a false position as a minister of Christ, which cannot be instrumental in building up the Church spiritually, and must be most detrimental to its growth.

The question of unity, in preaching the Gospel, or in presenting its claims, may be considered by some as a unit, with regard to an end sought; but men may radically differ as to the means used to obtain or accomplish it. This depends entirely upon just what is sought. If, for instance, the end sought is, that the Church may have an increased membership, or to be strengthened, the means employed by one may accomplish this without preaching a Gospel sermon. Another having the burden of souls upon him, preaching Christ and him crucified, and the result in numbers added to the Church the same, the question is, which Church has really been strengthened and built up? Surely not the former. Again, one may discourse upon speculative subjects, and be instrumental in attracting large congregations, or engage renowned evangelists, producing large attendance, and by much effort, tact, overpersuasion, excitement, and influence, bring in large numbers, as converts, to the Church, without producing in the heart positive convictions, sincere repentance, or genuine conversion, though

having been persuaded that they are converted, they are led to join the Church on probation, and afterward become members of the Church. While another has preached the Gospel in simplicity and plainness, has not been popular (for such are not so now esteemed by a large class), but a few have been soundly converted, and are living witnesses as saved men and women. Which of the two preachers have really attained the end sought—that of saving souls, or preaching the Gospel, of proclaiming the truth, of sustaining the character of a good minister of Jesus Christ, and of strengthening the Church of God, by adding to the Church such as shall be saved? It must be apparent.

In order to accomplish the work God has given us to do, there must be unity of action, oneness of thought, harmony of work, and agreement of statement; while, above all, a uniformity in preaching, expounding, and presenting the essential doctrines of the Gospel in a clear, concise, and unmistakable manner, so that whoever preaches the glorious Gospel, and in whatever land, or

language taught, it will be the same Gospel, and attended with the same results: salvation through Christ by faith.

Variety of opinion, diversity of thought, freedom of expression, looseness of doctrine, ambition for popularity, elevation and preference, together with a desire to appear scholastic, rhetorical, and finished, robs the Gospel of its force, its glory, and its saving influence, as it becomes secondary, if the former must be attained. This need not be so, but, alas, in too many cases it is. That it may not, the first great and essential principle and conviction must be, "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel," even if I fail to lead or form public opinion, if I fail to gain popularity, or to become the brilliant meteor, around which the great, the noble, and the rich gather, enraptured and charmed with the flashes of oratory, or paralyzed by the profound logic and eloquence to which they listen. Yet I am to stand behind the cross and unfurl the blood-stained banner and preach, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away

the sin of the world.” I am only the standard-bearer. “Christ is all and in all.” Instead of preaching for popularity, or posing self upon the pedestal, we must present Christ as the fairest of ten thousand and the one altogether lovely. With all the attainments of the schools and colleges, let them be consecrated to God, so that the whole army, from the general to the humblest private, may be his, to honor, love, and glorify. God forbid that the Gospel languish and die in consequence of unsanctified literary attainments, even at the cost of my preference. “I must decrease, but he must increase;” I am unworthy, but he is worthy. He is “the Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of peace.” He is the Christ, the mighty to save. “Look unto him,” not to me. Conviction of this important fact will lead to the preparation necessary to carry out and labor for the promotion of this glorious cause, and the coming of the kingdom of God, by the preaching of this Gospel. Then its power will be manifest in the salvation of precious souls

from sin and eternal death. "He that winneth souls is wise." "He that converteth a sinner from the error of his ways, shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins." The commission given is, "Go, preach." The theme is named, "My Gospel." To whom is it declared? "To every creature." What to do, and in whose name is stated: "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." There is no mistaking the commission, theme, or duty. This Gospel, which is good news, is for sinners, and is to be preached unto them especially. "Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." The minister of the Gospel is, therefore, to preach to such, "Repent ye." When this is done, they are taught to confess and forsake their sins, and to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, as their Saviour. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." That the sinner may know

how to do this, and receive pardon, the essential and necessary things must be taught. Not as I think, but as God's word directs. Tell them of Jesus and his life, why he came, how he suffered, what he said, how he died on the cross, how he arose, where he ever liveth, for us to intercede.

The conditions of salvation, which are conviction, confession, repentance, belief, and saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, are necessary to pardon and adoption. Therefore unity of action, oneness of work, harmony of thought, agreement in statement of the word of God, will insure strength, give peace and prosperity to the Church, and establish believers in the faith, thoroughly prepared for every good word and work. These will also earnestly contend for the “faith once delivered to the saints;” all in consequence of being faithfully instructed by the faithful minister of the Gospel, to whom is committed this charge and trust. How very essential that we keep it, so as to adorn the doctrine; that we bring no reproach upon the Gospel; that we put

on the whole armor ; that we have that charity which believeth all things, endureth all things, which is not puffed up, which doth not behave itself unseemly. It is important that the ministry be not blamed ; that Christ may be exalted ; that Christ may be in the word, in the theme, in the prayer, in the sermon, in the minister, in the heart, in the life. To accomplish this work will require a thorough acquaintance with the subject, which is the Gospel, and an experimental acquaintance with the author of it, who is Christ. To depict his attributes, to portray his character, to extol his virtues and worth, to unfold his precepts, and present this spotless Saviour, the world's Redeemer, will require all our talents, time, and voice, our self, our reputation. This one way must be our choice. This will enable us to embrace the highest culture, the deepest research, the finest rhetoric, the sharpest logic, and the soundest philosophy ; and become the humble instruments in the hands of the Master, to preach the everlasting Gospel, and the unsearchable riches of Jesus, the Son of God. To

do this will require patience, wisdom, and grace, but to accomplish this will glorify our Father in heaven, whose children we are, and if faithful in these things, few, but important, he will make us ruler over many, and say to each, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

CHAPTER X.

Saving Belief.

WHAT constitutes saving belief?

1. Personal acknowledgment or confession.

2. Filial obedience in all things.

3. Heartfelt and sincere belief.

1. Actuated by a thorough conviction, the man must confess, first, that there is a God; second, that he is almighty; third, that he is all-wise to govern; fourth, that he is just to punish or reward; fifth, that he will punish disobedience and reward obedience, without respect to persons or conditions.

2. Convinced of this power, justice, and impartiality, there will be commenced in the heart that principle or essential quality which will enable him to confess without fear of men or demons, the omnipotence of God in all things, in the heavens and on the earth, and that what

he declares is true, and what he promises will be fulfilled.

3. Thus convicted, the individual will be led to confession and obedience; for unless men are convinced, there is no confession or acknowledgment, and, consequently, no obedience. It is natural to be influenced by the great, the sublime, and the pleasant, when we are convinced of its benefits. A want of conviction, or unwillingness to ascertain the truth, may account for the tardiness or reluctance of men and women in seeking religion. An unwilling soul, like an unconverted one, will never truly confess, therefore will never believe to divine acceptance, and without this cannot be saved; for it has not the heart quality which will produce the right belief unto salvation. The office work of the Holy Spirit is to produce in the willing and teachable heart these chief and all-important qualities: conviction of righteousness, sin, and judgment; also confession, obedience, and duty. When thus enlightened the man will give expression by words in confession and admiration,

and in acts by obedience, having a zeal according to knowledge, and knowledge producing its legitimate fruit in the heart from which flow confession, acknowledgment, and belief. This kind of belief is the principle of Christian practice. Conforming the practice to this belief is closely connected with a tender conscience that forsakes sin and rises to a new life in imitating the Christ-life, which is purity of thought, holiness of life, and obedience to the truth.

This also teaches that what God has said is true, and being taught seeks to please the instructor as to what is necessary to salvation. What may appear to human eyes and understanding impossible, becomes to faith and obedience possible. Implicit belief in almighty power influences the will and affections, so that we will not only love, but love to obey rightly and truly. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." The Christian believes, while infidelity proceeds from an aversion of that confession, springing from an evil heart of unbelief.

Belief acceptable to God and that which brings salvation is to believe in such a manner as to engage the affections and influence the actions, which may be known ; not only to love, but to obey. That kind of belief which only produces love is not saving belief. Saving belief constrains men ; it becomes an incentive or motive-power which operates the desires and inclinations of the heart. It holds the reins and gives directions to the prancing steeds of thought. It ascends the highest mountains of difficulty, traverses the sandy deserts of trouble, and reaches the city of pleasure and contentment in time to honor the King in his beauty. It lays the trophies at his feet, and joins in the loud-swelling chorus of the coronation.

“All hail the power of Jesus’ name!

Let angels prostrate fall ;

Bring forth the royal diadem,

And crown him Lord of all.”

And this we may do ; for if we confess him, he will confess us. If we believe with our heart

and in our heart that God hath raised him from the dead, it will lead us also to believe that he will raise us from the dead. We shall participate in the glory and honor and salvation of our Saviour, who was dead but lives; and through him we shall live. "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." This is joyful news. "He that believeth shall never die." If any are indulging a hope of salvation without this confession and heart belief, it is and will be vain. If this be true, then let us adopt the language of that hymn of prayer:

"O for a lowly, contrite heart,
Believing, true, and clean,
Which neither life nor death can part
From him that dwells within!

"A heart in every thought renewed,
And full of love divine;
Perfect, and right, and pure, and good,
A copy, Lord, of thine."

THE END.

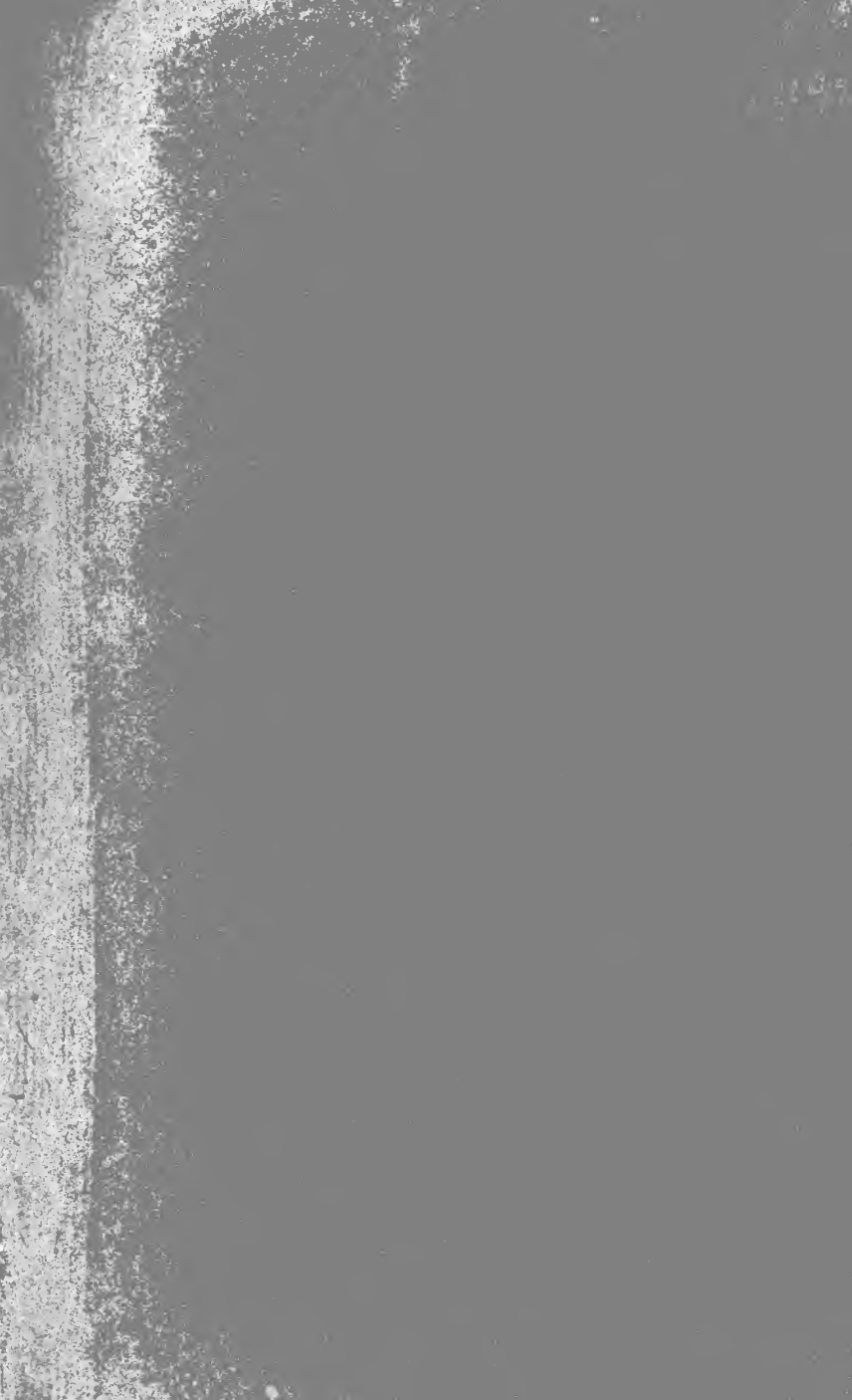




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